

the Union, but we don't have a budget to match bold words. We need bold initiatives to match bold words, to really do something to reduce our dependence. It makes us vulnerable. It is weakening our economy.

I said to the President: What a difference it could make. Would it not be wonderful if the President could wake up and instead of turning to the Middle East for oil, he could look to the Midwest of our own country where we could help grow our way out of this crisis by growing the feedstock that could produce biodiesel and ethanol, soybeans, corn, and canola? We are about to build in North Dakota the biggest biodiesel plant in North America. That is going to help us wean ourselves from this ongoing dependence upon foreign energy. I hope very much my colleagues will support this amendment.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The Legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Who yields time?

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I yield 4 minutes to the Senator from New Jersey.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey is recognized for 4 minutes.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I will soon offer an amendment to remove the airline passenger tax increase from this budget. It is fundamentally unfair for the President to raise taxes on everyday families as he doles out massive tax cuts to the wealthy.

Hidden among the thousands of pages in this legislation is a proposal to double the minimum amount that airline passengers pay as a security tax. President Bush wants to increase this tax from \$2.50 per flight to \$5 per flight. That is a 100-percent tax increase.

The impact on a family of four traveling roundtrip on nonstop flights is illustrated by the chart that we have here. An increase in security tax for a family of four traveling roundtrip on nonstop flights, typically, if it is \$20 now, is going to be \$40 obviously. That is quite a burden.

The traveling public is already too heavily taxed. Air travelers pay an enormous amount of Federal taxes on every airline ticket—nearly 20 percent of the base fare price now. For example, the tax on the average domestic roundtrip flight of \$230 is \$45. That is a tax rate of almost 20 percent.

Air travelers are taxed every time they turn around. They pay the Federal excise tax—on top of the Federal segment tax, on top of the passenger facility charge, on top of the security

tax. Now the President wants to double the security tax.

To make matters worse, this tax increase will hit families the hardest. Sixty-three percent of the domestic air trips in this country in 2004 were taken for personal purposes, including vacations and visits to families and loved ones.

I am one of the strongest advocates for transportation security resources for our country, but we have to provide these necessary resources by spreading the tax burdens across this country fairly and not targeting everyday Americans while special interests raid the Federal Treasury.

I also want to point out to my colleagues that this amendment is offset by closing abusive tax shelters. So when we look at this, if the airlines don't pass along this tax increase to the average family, they themselves will have to experience further losses. There was \$10 billion in losses in 2005 by the aviation industry. That is on top of \$32 billion from 2001 to 2004. There were 150,000 jobs lost since 9/11. They just cannot handle it.

So I urge my colleagues to support the amendment and say no to the Bush airline passenger tax increases, keeping in mind that those tax increases are put upon the average family to give the wealthiest among us huge tax breaks. It is unfair and it ought not to be permitted. I urge you in this instance to vote no on further tax increases for the average American family.

With that, I yield the floor.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from New Jersey for accommodating the schedule of his colleagues by coming this morning and offering his amendment. Next in the queue is Senator BURR with an amendment on avian flu.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If the Senator will suspend, the Chair advises that the Senator from New Jersey did not send up an amendment.

AMENDMENT NO. 3137

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Yes. We neglected to do the most important part of it. I was overcome by the speech, Mr. President.

I send the amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New Jersey [Mr. LAUTENBERG] proposes an amendment numbered 3137.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that further reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To eliminate the President's proposed tax increase on American airline passengers in fiscal year 2007 and to provide adequate funding for commercial aviation security and to offset these costs by closing corporate tax loopholes)

On page 3, line 13, increase the amount by \$1,230,000,000.

On page 4, line 1, increase the amount by \$1,230,000,000.

On page 4, line 13, increase the amount by \$1,230,000,000.

On page 5, line 4, increase the amount by \$1,230,000,000.

On page 16, line 21, increase the amount by \$1,230,000,000.

On page 16, line 22, increase the amount by \$1,230,000,000.

On page 53, line 1, increase the amount by \$1,230,000,000.

On page 53, line 2, increase the amount by \$1,230,000,000.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set the pending amendment aside.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3114

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I send an amendment No. 3114 to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from North Carolina [Mr. BURR] proposes an amendment numbered 3114.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide for the establishment of a reserve fund concerning pandemic influenza preparedness planning)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ RESERVE FUND FOR PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PREPAREDNESS PLANNING.**

If the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate reports a bill or joint resolution, or if an amendment is offered thereto, or if a conference report is submitted thereon, that—

(1) rebuilds the vaccine industry in the United States which has shrunk from over 25 to less than 5 companies;

(2) improves the United States capacity to produce life-saving pandemic influenza vaccines and antivirals;

(3) ensures adequate funding for advanced development and acquisition of needed medical countermeasures for biodefense and pandemic influenza protection;

(4) enhances the Strategic National Stockpile of pandemic influenza vaccines, antivirals, and other medical products;

(5) strengthens the Federal, State, and local public health infrastructure to effectively respond to a pandemic influenza outbreak;

(6) increases the domestic and international surveillance and outbreak containment capabilities; and

(7) improves public awareness and education of pandemic influenza preparedness planning;

assuming that the Committee is within its allocation as provided under section 302 (a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the chairman of the Committee on the Budget may make the appropriate adjustments in allocations and aggregates to the extent that such legislation would not increase the deficit for fiscal years 2007 and for the period of fiscal years 2007 through 2011.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I rise on the Senate floor today to not only offer